we were two dayes old at sea, a Pirat of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding our selves too slow of saile, we put on a compelled valour, and in the grapple I boarded them: in the instant they got cleere of our ship, so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like theeves of mercy, but they knew what they did; I am to do a turne for them. Let the King have the Letters I have sent, and repaire thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldst flye death. I have words to speake in thine eare will make thee dumbe, yet are they much too light for the bord of the matter, these good-fellowes will bring thee where I am, *Rosencraus* and *Guyldensterne* hold their course for *England*, of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.

So that thou knowest thine,
Hamlet.

Hora. Come, I will make you way for these your Letters,
And doe't the speedier that you may direct me
To him from whom you brought them. *Exeunt.*

Enter King and Laertes.

King. Now must your conscience my acquittance seale,
And you must put me in your heart for friend,
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing eare,
That he which hath your noble father slaine
Pursued my life.

Laer. It well appeares: but tell me
Why you proceed not against these feates
So criminall and capitall in nature,
As by your safety, greatnesse, wisdome, all things else,
You mainly were stirr'd up.

King. O for two speciall reasons,
Which may to you perhaps seem much unsinnow'd,
But yet to me tha're strong: the Queen his mother
Lives almost by his lookes, and for my selfe,
My vertue or my plague, be it either which,
She is so conclive to my life and soule,
That as the starre moves not but in his Sphere,
I could not but by her: the other motive
Why to a publike count I might not goe,
Is the great love the generall gender beare him,

Who

Who dipping all his faults in their affection,
Worke like the Spring that turneth wood to stone,
Convert his gyves to graces, so that my arrowes
Too slightly timbered for so loved armes,
Would have reverted to my bow againe,
But not where I have aim'd them.

Laer. And so I have a noble father lost,
A sister driven into desperate tearmes,
Whose worth, if praises may goe backe again,
Stood challenger on mount of all the age
For her perfections: but my revenge will come.

King. Breake not your sleeps for that, you must n
That we are made of stuffe so flat and dull,
That we can let our beards be shooke with danger,
And thinke it pastime: you shortly shall heare more.
I lov'd your father, and we love our selfe,
And that I hope will teach you to imagine.

Enter a Messenger with Letters.

Mess. These to your Majesty, this to the Queen.

King From *Hamlet*? who brought them?

Mess. Sailers my Lord they say, I saw them not,
They were given me by *Claudio*, he received them
Of him that brought them.

King. Laertes you shall heare them: leave us.
High and mighty, you shall know I am set naked on
dome: to morrow shall I beg leave to see your King
I shall (first asking you pardon) thereunto recount t
my sudden returne.

King. What should this meane? are all the rest co
Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?

Laer. Know you the hand?

King. 'Tis *Hamlets* character. Naked!
And in a post-script here he saies alone,
Can you devise me?

Laer. I am lost in it my Lord; but let him come,
It warmes the very sicknesse in my heart,
That I live, and tell him to his teeth,
Thus didst thou.